

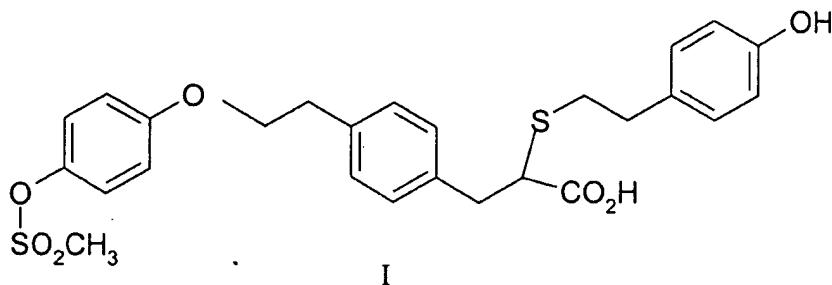
**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

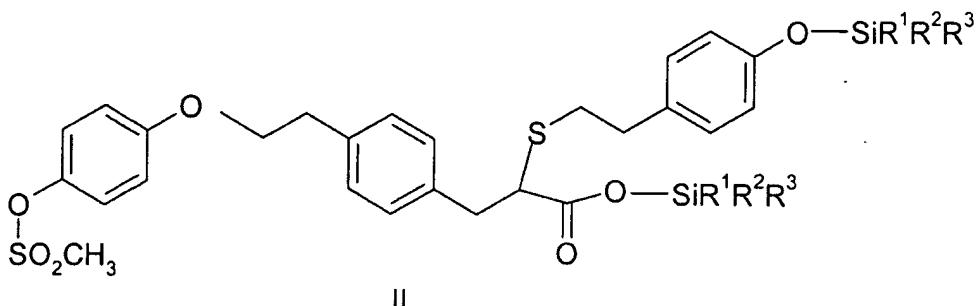
**Listing of claims:**

Claims 1-5 (cancelled).

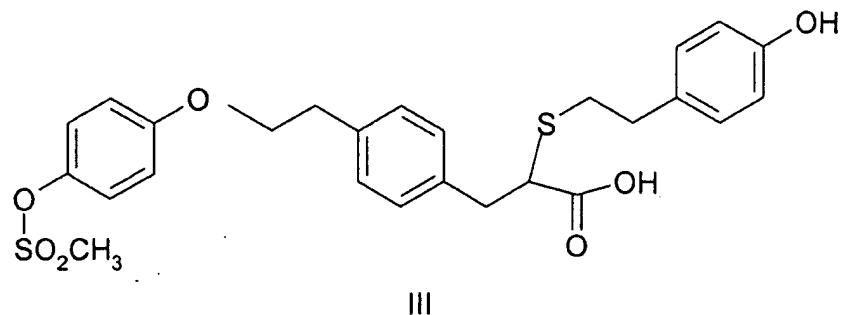
Claim 6 (currently amended): A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{{[methylsulfonyl]oxy}phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid according to claim 4 comprising reacting a compound of formula I



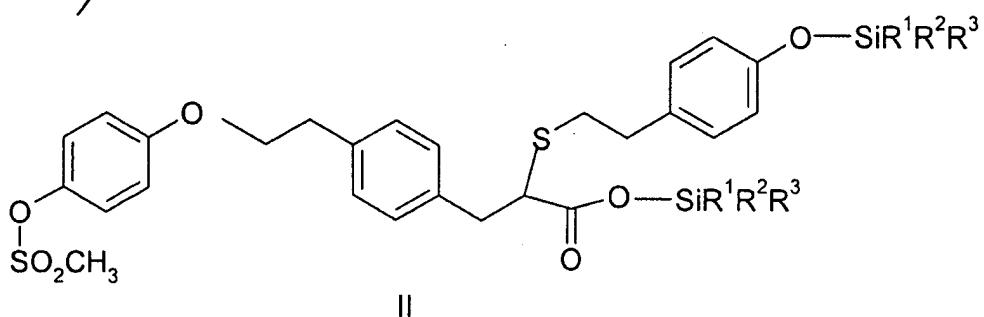
enriched in one enantiomer with a chlorosilane of formula  $\text{ClSiR}^1\text{R}^2\text{R}^3$  in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  independently represent a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkyl group or aryl in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to 150°C to give a compound of formula II



in which  $\text{R}^1$ ,  $\text{R}^2$ , and  $\text{R}^3$  are previously defined which is hydrolysed to give a racemic compound of formula III

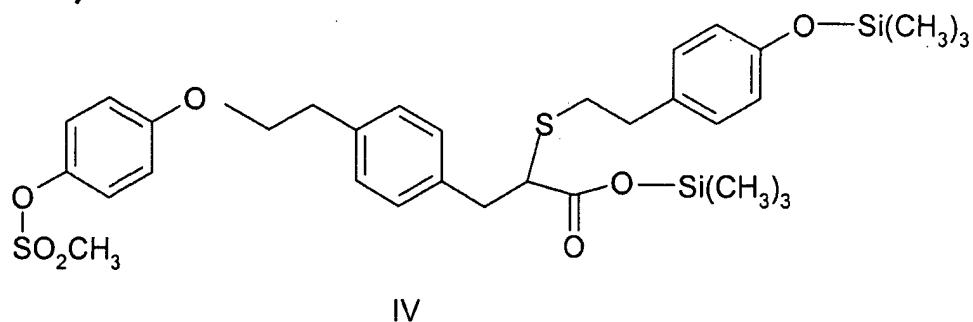


<sup>2</sup>  
Claim ~~7~~ (original): A compound of formula II



wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, and R<sup>3</sup> independently represent a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl group or aryl.

<sup>3</sup>  
Claim ~~8~~ (original): A compound of formula IV



<sup>4</sup>  
Claim ~~9~~ (new): A process according to claim ~~8~~ <sup>1</sup> wherein the chlorosilane is selected from: chlorotriethylsilane, chlorodimethyltertbutylsilane, chlorotriphenylsilane and chlorodimethylphenyl silane.

5  
Claim 10/~~new~~: A process according to claim 6 wherein the chlorosilane is chlorotrimethylsilane.

6  
Claim 11/~~new~~: A process according to claim 6 wherein the nitrogenous base is selected from 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene, a trialkylamine, an optionally substituted pyridine or an optionally substituted imidazole.

7  
Claim 12/~~new~~: A process according to claim 11 wherein the nitrogenous base is 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene.